

Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.A. Planetary Sciences and Space Exploration within the Department of Earth Sciences at Freie Universität Berlin

Disclaimer: Please note that only the German version of this document is legally binding. This translation is intended for the convenience of the non-German-reading public and is for informational purposes only.

Preamble

On the basis of Section 14.1.1.2 of Freie Universität's supplemental rules and regulations (*Teilgrundordnung [Erprobungsmodell]*) from October 27, 1998 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 24/1998) in conjunction with Section 15 of the Law on Admissions to Higher Education in the Federal State of Berlin for Programs with Admission Requirements (*Berliner Hochschulzulassungsgesetz*, BerlHZG), in the version of the announcement of the amended version from October 9, 2019 (GVBl. p. 695), last amended on July 5, 2022 (GVBl. p. 450) in conjunction with Section 10.5.2 of the Berlin Higher Education Act (*Berliner Hochschulgesetz*, BerlHG) in the version of the announcement of the amended version from July 26, 2011 (GVBl., p. 378), last amended on December 20, 2024 (GVBl. p. 643), the Department Council of the Department of Earth Sciences at Freie Universität Berlin issued the following regulations on January 22, 2025.¹

Section 1 Scope

These regulations govern admissions to the study program in accordance with Section 10.5.2 BerlHG and the selection procedure for the allocation of places in accordance with Section 15.1.1.1 BerlHZG for the master's degree program M.Sc. Planetary Sciences and Space Exploration within the Department of Earth Sciences at Freie Universität Berlin. This is a consecutive master's program as defined under Section 23.3.1.1a BerlHG.

Section 2 Number of Available Places and the Application Process

(1) The number of places available for the master's degree program for each given admissions cycle is stipulated in Freie Universität Berlin's General Admission Regulations.

(2) The application for admission must be submitted electronically to the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin – Admissions Office using the online application system. The form "Self-Indication of Admission Requirements and Selection Criteria" (Appendix 2) is a necessary part of the application. It must be completed in full and submitted with the application.

(3) The application deadline is May 31 of each year.

(4) Applications for admission must be accompanied by the applicant's first university degree (or equivalent professional certification) referred to below in Section 3.1 in the format specified by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin – Admissions Office.

(5) Applicants can still submit their application for the master's degree program even if they do not have the university degree referred to below in Section 3.1 if they are waiting on certain assessment results to become available. In this case, the applicant must provide proof of a good academic record based on previous assessment results, and the university degree referred to in Section 3.1 must be obtained before the master's degree program begins. Finally, applicants must also ensure that the requirements stipulated in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 are also fulfilled in due time. This expectation is fulfilled in particular if at least two-thirds of the total coursework has been evaluated, the application for the final thesis project has been submitted, and the work schedule for the thesis has been set so that it can be completed in due time before the start of the master's degree program. The applicant's grade point average will be considered as part of the application and factors into the selection process. The grade point average is based on the applicant's previous coursework as reflected in their current transcript, which they should submit with the application. In this case, the result of the university degree is considered irrelevant.

¹ These regulations were approved by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin on January 27, 2025, and by the Berlin Senate Administration's department with responsibility for higher education on May 14, 2025.

(6) Freie Universität Berlin has no obligation to investigate the facts of a case on its own initiative (*ex officio*).

Section 3 Admission Requirements

(1) The admission requirement for the master's degree program is a first university degree or an equivalent degree from an institution of higher education within or outside of Germany. This degree must have been completed in the subject of natural sciences or engineering in which at least 60 credit points were obtained in Earth sciences, biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, or computer science, including at least 8 credit points in physics and at least 10 credit points in mathematics and/or statistics.

(2) Applicants who have completed their university degree at an institution where English was not the language of instruction must demonstrate proficiency in English to at least the B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or equivalent.

(3) Applicants are exempt from the requirement to provide proof of proficiency in German.

(4) The examination board responsible for the master's degree program determines the equivalence of any documentation provided.

Section 4 Quotas, Selection Criteria, Organizational Aspects

(1) 80 percent of the study placements that are still available after the preliminary quotas have been fulfilled will be allocated according to the selection process as outlined in this document (higher education quota). 20 percent of the study placements will be distributed according to Section 15.1.1.2 BerlHZG. 5 percent of the study placements are reserved for the quota stipulated in Section 15.1.3 BerlHZG.

(2) Candidates are selected for the master's program according to the following criteria:

1. The level of qualification as demonstrated by the applicant's academic performance in their previous degree program (Section 15.2.1.1 BerlHZG).

2. Considerations of the applicant's academic background in their choice of previous degree program and academic interests that provide an indication of their specific motivation and suitability for the subject (Section 15.2.1.4 BerlHZG).

3. Other qualifications acquired outside of a university degree program (Section 15.2.1.5 BerlHZG).

4. The result of a selection interview held with the candidate that should allow the selection panel to gain an understanding of the candidate's motivation and their suitability for the master's degree program (Section 15.2.1.6 BerlHZG).

(3) In the selection process, selection points will be awarded under the criteria defined above in Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.4. The maximum number of points that can be awarded is 130. The number of applicants admitted to the selection interview under Section 4.2.4 shall be limited to two-and-a-half times the number of study placements available as determined by the higher education quota. The selection criteria for inviting participants to the selection interview are a composite of the criteria stated in Sections 4.2.1. to 4.2.3.

(4) For the selection criteria listed under Section 4.2.1 of these regulations, a maximum of 60 selection points can be awarded in relation to the average grade stated on the degree certificate for the candidate's previous degree program. The points for each average grade are listed in Appendix 1 to these regulations.

(5) For the selection criteria listed under Section 4.2.2 of these regulations, a maximum of 10 selection points can be awarded. Of these, either 5 selection points can be awarded once for examinations and coursework carried out in the field of planetary sciences and/or space sciences for which at least 3 credit

points were obtained, or 10 selection points can be awarded once for examinations and coursework in the area of planetary sciences and/or space sciences for which at least 10 credit points were obtained.

(6) For the selection criteria listed under Section 4.2.3 of these regulations, 10 selection points can be awarded once for practical work (e.g., as part of a voluntary internship) in the area of planetary sciences and/or space sciences where the practical work amounts to at least 150 hours or when the applicant has been published in a recognized specialist journal as a first or second author.

(7) For the selection criteria listed under Section 4.2.4 of these regulations, a selection interview will be conducted by the admissions officers referred to below in Section 4.8. Interviews are not open to the public and should last about 10 minutes per applicant. The admissions officers will invite applicants to the selection interviews in writing, providing them with the time and location of their interview. The invitation must be issued and sent to the candidate at least 10 working days before the interview is to take place. A record is to be kept of each interview detailing the basis on which the applicant was assessed and the interview outcome. Up to 50 selection points can be awarded for the interview, depending on the assessment of the applicant's motivation and aptitude for the master's program.

1. Extremely well qualified = 42 to 50 points
2. Very well qualified = 33 to 41 points
3. Well qualified = 24 to 32 points
4. Qualified = 15 to 23 points
5. Potentially qualified = 6 to 14 points
6. Not qualified = 0 to 5 points

(8) At least two admissions officers will be appointed to supervise the selection process. The dean of the Department of Earth Sciences appoints these two people under the authority of Freie Universität Berlin's Executive Board. The appointed admissions officers must be authorized examiners for the master's degree program and must be university employees with Freie Universität Berlin as their main employer. These positions may not be filled by substitutes or alternates.

Section 5 Admission Decision

(1) The final admission decision is made by the Executive Board – Admissions Office on the basis of the outcome of the selection process.

(2) The selected candidates receive a formal notification of admission stating the deadlines for their written acceptance and enrollment. Failure to meet these deadlines may result in the place being offered to the next candidate on the ranking list.

(3) Candidates selected based on their transcripts are granted tentative admission and can enroll in the first semester of the program on a conditional basis. Generally, the university degree required for admission as described in Section 3.1 must be submitted by the end of the first semester of study, together with relevant documentation proving that any other requirements associated with the degree have also been met. If the necessary documents are not submitted on time, the student's admission will be retracted.

(4) Applicants who are not admitted will receive a rejection letter that states the reasons for the decision.

(5) The documents submitted for the selection procedure are to be kept until the decision is final; in the case of legal proceedings, they are to be kept until a legally binding decision has been made.

Section 6 Entry into Force

(1) These regulations enter into force on the day following their publication in *FU-Mitteilungen* (the official bulletin of Freie Universität Berlin).

(2) With their publication, the Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.A. Planetary Sciences from December 15, 2021 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 14/2022, p. 373), amended on April 19, 2023 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 24/2023, p. 582), shall lapse.

Appendix 1 (to Section 4.4)

Allocation of selection points based on the grade point average as recorded in the documentation for the first university degree in accordance with Section 4.4.

Grade point average	Selection points
1.0	60
1.1	58
1.2	56
1.3	54
1.4	52
1.5	50
1.6	48
1.7	46
1.8	44
1.9	42
2.0	40
2.1	38
2.2	36
2.3	34
2.4	32
2.5	30
2.6	28
2.7	26
2.8	24
2.9	22
3.0	20
3.1	18
3.2	16
3.3	14
3.4	12
3.5	10
3.6	8
3.7	6
3.8	4
3.9	2
4.0	0

Anlage 2 (Englisch)

**M.Sc. Planetary Sciences and Space Exploration
Self-Indication of Admission Requirements and Selection Criteria**

Applicant Information

Application number:	
E-Mail address:	
Last name:	
First name:	
Date of birth (DD.MM.YYYY):	
Bachelor's degree in:	
Name and location of institution where bachelor's degree was obtained:	
Additional university degree(s):	

Admission Requirements

1. Language Certificate

Please provide proof of your English language skills at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or equivalent. An official certificate must also be uploaded to the application portal.

Name and date (DD.MM.YYYY) of your English language certificate or equivalent document:

You can find more information on how to provide proof of English language proficiency on the following website:
<https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/studium/bewerbung/master/konsekutive-masterstudiengaenge/sprachliche-zugangsvor-aussetzungen/index.html>

2. Academic Requirements**2.1 Courses**

If your previous degree program did not use the ECTS standard for credit points, please indicate here the maximum number of credit points that can be earned in your previous degree program (e.g. 180 credit points for six semesters of study).

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At least 60 credit points in the fields of geosciences, biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics or computer science are required for admission to the M.Sc. Planetary Sciences and Space Exploration.

Please indicate the relevant courses below. Here is an example of how to fill out the form:

Course title ¹	Institution ²	Credit points ³	Field of Study ⁴
Earth I	Freie Universität Berlin, Institute of Geological Sciences	6 ECTS	Geosciences
Linear Algebra I	Freie Universität Berlin, Institute of Mathematics	10 ECTS	Mathematics

Courses to be considered for the application

Course title	Institution	Credit points	Field of study

1 Please indicate the title of the course as stated in your transcript of records, e.g. "Earth I", "Linear Algebra I" etc.

2 Please indicate the institution that awarded the certificate for the course. If the course was completed at a university, please also indicate the respective department.

3 Please indicate the number of credits you received for the successful completion of the course and the unit that these credits are measured in, e.g. ECTS.

4 Please enter the field of study in natural sciences to which you would assign the course (geosciences, biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics/statistics or computer science)

At least 8 credit points in the field of physics and at least 10 credit points in the field of mathematics and/or statistics are required for admission to the master's degree program. Please indicate below which courses should be considered. If it is unclear from the list of courses you have provided how exactly the minimum requirement is fulfilled, you can also include additional information, such as content covered in courses with titles that cannot be clearly attributed to mathematics (linear algebra, statistics, etc.) or physics (thermodynamics, mechanics, astronomy, geophysics, etc.).

2.2 Courses related to planetary sciences and space sciences

5 selection points may be awarded for evidence of examinations and coursework in the field of planetary sciences and/or space sciences in which at least 3 credit points were obtained. 10 selection points may be awarded for evidence of examinations and coursework in the field of planetary sciences and/or space sciences in which at least 10 credit points were obtained.

Please provide a brief description of your examinations and coursework in the area of planetary sciences and/or space sciences should the above apply.

2.3 Research-based activities

10 selection points may be awarded for evidence of practical work (e.g. as part of a voluntary internship, i.e. not part of previous studies) in the field of planetary sciences and/or space sciences amounting to at least 150 hours or alternatively a publication as first or second author in a recognized scientific journal.

Please provide a brief description of your practical activity (internship provider, period, number of hours). An official certificate must also be uploaded to the application portal or a reference for the publication must be given.

